

Message Text

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ACTION SSM-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-11 SAB-01 SAM-01 OC-05

CCO-00 ACDA-05 AF-06 /085 W
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O R 131540Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 92

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO SINAI FIELD MISSION 002

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1980

STATE FOR SSM FROM THORNE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS

SUBJECT: CEREMONY ATTENDANCE ON ACTIVATION OF SFM ON FEBRUARY 22, 1976

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 1069, (B) CAIRO 1917

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH ISRAELI CHIEF LIAISON OFFICER COLONEL LEVINSON, HE INDICATED THAT HE EXPECTED THAT BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND ISRAELI PRESS WOULD REQUEST PERMISSION TO ATTEND ANY CEREMONY THAT MIGHT TAKE PLACE ON FEBRUARY 22. IN DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER WITH CHARGE DUNNIGAN, THE POSSIBILITY OF INVITING THE AMBASSADOR AND A FEW KEY MEMBERS OF THE TEL AVIV COUNTRY TEAM WAS ALSO DISCUSSED.

2. AT MEETING WITH GENERAL GAMASY IN CAIRO ON FEBRUARY 12, I POINTED OUT THAT I PROPOSED TO ACTIVATE THE SFM AT 1200 HOURS ON FEBRUARY 22 AFTER COMPLETING INSPECTION AND VERIFICATION PROCEDURES AT E-1 AND J-1. I ASKED HIM WHETHER OR NOT INTERNATIONAL OR EGYPTIAN PRESS WOULD BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND AND INDICATED THAT
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I HOPED TO INVITE AMBASSADOR EILTS AND KEY MEMBERS OF THE

CAIRO COUNTRY TEAM. GENERAL GAMASY REACTED BY SAYING THAT THE BUFFER ZONE IS EGYPTIAN TERRITORY AND BY STATING THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF ATTENDANCE BY THE EGYPTIAN PRESS AT THE CEREMONY. HE STATED THAT HE FELT THAT ANY CEREMONY IN WHICH EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI JOURNALISTS WERE LINED UP ON OPPOSITE SIDES WOULD BE REMINISCENT OF KILOMETER 101. IN ANY CASE, IT WAS A POLITICAL MATTER WHICH HE WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS WITH POLITICAL AUTHORITIES AND PRESIDENT SADAT. HE SAID PERHAPS ANOTHER FORMULA COULD BE FOUND SUCH AS THE EGYPTIAN SIDE COMING ONE DAY AND THE ISRAELI SIDE ANOTHER DAY. HE STRESSED THAT ANYTHING INVOLVING SIMULTANEOUS APPEARANCE BY THE PRESS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS MOST UNLIKELY. GAMASY EMPHASIZED THAT AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE AREA WAS THE MOST SENSITIVE PART OF THE ENTIRE SINAI II AGREEMENT AND DRAWING ATTENTION TO IT COULD LEAD TO MORE PROPAGANDA ATTACKS AGAINST EGYPT. (FOR SAME REASON GAMASY REQUESTED SFM NOT DISPLAY US FLAG ON BLDGS OR VEHICLES) IF ANY CEREMONIES WERE TO BE HELD, HE SAID, THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE SEPARATE FOR THE TWO SIDES, I STATED THAT I KNEW THE PRESS WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED IN ATTENDING BUT COULD ONLY GO WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE GOVERNMENTS AND ONLY FOR THE CEREMONY, THAT I UNDERSTAND THE POINTS HE HAD MADE, AND THAT I WOULD AWAIT AN OFFICIAL REPLY.

3. IN PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION IN CAIRO, AMBASSADOR EILTS CONCURRED IN RAISING THE POSSIBILITY OF A CEREMONY WITH GENERAL GAMASY AND PREDICTED SOME OF THE RESERVATIONS THAT

GENERAL GAMASY MIGHT HAVE. PENDING THE REPLY OF THE GOE, I DO NOT PROPOSE TO TAKE ANY FURTHER ACTION ON THIS MATTER. AS SOON AS THE GOE SENDS US THEIR REPLY, I WILL FORWARD IT TO THE DEPT AND REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS. WHILE THE ISSUE OF ATTENDANCE BY THE PRESS FROM ONE OR BOTH COUNTRIES HAS NOT YET BECOME A PRESSING ISSUE, I WOULD EXPECT A REQUEST FOR LARGE ATTENDANCE EARLY NEXT WEEK. FOR PRESS COVERAGE REQUESTED FOR FEBRUARY 19, SEE REFS (A) AND (B).
EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: THE PRESS, VISITS, REPRESENTATION AT CEREMONIES, TRACKING STATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO01980
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760055-0941
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760252/aaaabtht.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SSM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 TEL AVIV 1069, 76 CAIRO 1917
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CEREMONY ATTENDANCE ON ACTIVATION OF SFM ON FEBRUARY 22, 1976
TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS
To: STATE TEL AVIV
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006